



State Representative Craig Miner

Dear Neighbor:

As your State Representative, I've made the families of Bethlehem, Litchfield, Morris, Warren and Woodbury my top priority at the State Capitol.

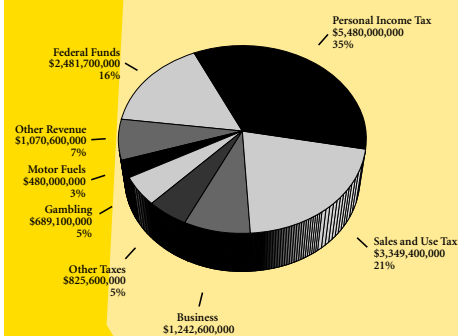
The 2005 session was an eventful one. The Legislature addressed a number of issues of importance to our communities this year. This mailing touches on several of the things we did to ensure greater public safety, address health care issues and enact government reform.

If you have any questions or comments concerning the 2005 session, please contact my home (860-567-4757) or office (800-842-1423) at any time. I wish you and your family a safe and enjoyable autumn.

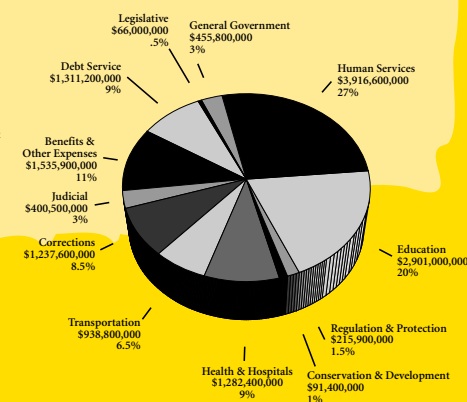
Sincerely,

BUDGET ENDING JUNE 30, 2005 THE 2005 GENERAL FUND AND THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND TOGETHER SPEND \$14.4 BILLION

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

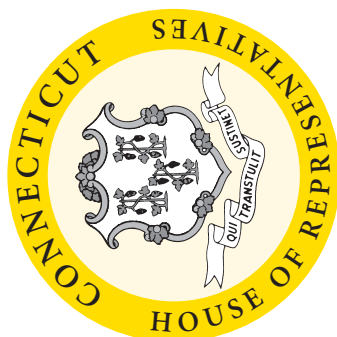


WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?



*Revenues Exceeded Spending Leaving A General Fund Surplus of \$777 Million

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State Representative
CRAIG MINER
Proudly Serving the 66th District
Bethlehem ★ Litchfield ★ Morris ★ Warren ★ Woodbury



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2005 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



State Representative
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Representative Miner speaks on the Floor of the House during the 2005 Legislative Session.

PUBLIC SAFETY
Cell Phone Ban

Public Act 05-159 bans the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. Effective October 1, 2005, the legislation prohibits drivers from using hand-held phones unless they are communicating an emergency situation to an emergency response operator, hospital, physician's office or health clinic, ambulance company, or fire or police department. Under the legislation, a violation is punishable as an infraction with fines of up to \$100.

Increased Penalties For Driving With A Suspended License, And Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

Public Act 05-215 establishes strict penalties for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended driver's license. Under the new legislation, anyone convicted of a second incident of driving with a suspended license will serve a mandatory 30 day jail sentence. The court can also impose additional penalties for repeated offenses. In addition, current law requires an administrative license suspension process for drivers who refuse to submit to a blood alcohol test or whose test results indicate an elevated BAC (.08% or more or .02% or more if the driver is under age 21). The new law doubles the license suspension periods if the offender is under age 21. This increase also applies to nonresident operating privileges.

Graduated Drivers Licenses

The Legislature passed legislation to address problems with the state's 2003 graduated driver's license law, which was intended to limit the number of teenage passengers in vehicles driven by 16 or 17-year old drivers. However, that law also restricted families from riding in the same car if a new 16 or 17 year old driver is behind the wheel. Public Act 05-54 removes the limit on immediate family passengers when the new driver is accompanied by at least one parent or guardian. It also increases, from 8 to 20 hours, the minimum amount of behind-the-wheel, on-the-road training a 16- or 17-year old must have before qualifying for licensure.

In addition, this new law prohibits a 16- or 17-year old licensed driver from driving from 12:00 a.m. through 5:00 a.m. unless he or she is traveling because of employment, school or religious activities, or medical necessity. I supported PA 05-54 because statistics show graduated license laws have a positive effect. I'm hopeful that increased training and a prohibition on unnecessary driving in the middle of the night will go a long way toward reducing the number of accidents among our teen drivers.

Signal Preemption Devices

Public Act 05-242 addresses a relatively new problem involving signal preemption devices. These are devices capable of changing a traffic control signal and are primarily used by police, fire and ambulance vehicles, in order to expedite their route to an emergency. Unfortunately, they have also been purchased by non-emergency personnel. The potential for serious traffic accidents and ability to delay emergency vehicles from reaching their destinations is sufficient reason to restrict their use to police and emergency vehicles in Connecticut.

New Booster Seat Requirements

Public Act 05-58 modifies Department of Motor Vehicles requirements for restraining children in motor vehicles. The new regulations extend child restraint system use requirements from children under age four weighing less than 40 pounds to children under age seven or who weigh less than 60 pounds, regardless of age. It also requires any child under age one or weighing less than 20 pounds to be transported in a rear-facing position in his child restraint system and requires children restrained in booster seats to be anchored by a seat belt that includes a shoulder belt. Use of a lap belt only is prohibited.

PUBLIC HEALTH
Coverage For Breast Cancer Screenings

Public Act 05-69 requires health insurance policies to offer ultrasound-screening options for women with a family history of breast cancer. In 1999, the Legislature mandated coverage for mammograms. Health authorities have noted that certain women can receive false negative results from a mammogram and, per their physician's orders, require additional testing for an accurate reading.

Patients' Rights

Public Act 05-128 requires hospitals to notify each patient in writing, upon the patient's admission, of his specific rights under the hospital's conditions of participation in Medicare. Notification must also inform the patient on how to complain, including how to contact the Department of Public Health (DPH).

Stem Cell Research

Public Act 05-149 provides \$100 million for stem cell research. The legislation permits research in the state involving human embryonic stem cells under certain conditions. Debate on this proposal was lengthy and touched upon moral issues of using embryonic stem cells for research, fiscal issues and oversight. To address concerns regarding human cloning for stem cell purposes, additional legislation (PA 05-272) includes penalties for violations of up to \$50,000 or five years imprisonment, or both.

Cardiac Care

The General Assembly approved legislation requiring state agencies to review ways to use data collected at health care facilities to improve cardiac care. Public Act 05-167 requires the Quality of Care Advisory Committee, which advises the Department of Public Health on quality of care issues, to examine and evaluate possible ways that the state's current data collection systems can be used to measure cardiac outcomes and the potential for statewide use of a cardiac outcome data collection system. The advisory committee must report its results and recommendations to the Legislature's Public Health Committee by December 1, 2007.



GOVERNMENT REFORM
New Ethics Board

In recent years, it had become clear that the existing configuration of the state Ethics Commission could not properly address alleged ethical misconduct by state officials. Public Act 05-183 abolishes the state's current nine-member State Ethics Commission (SEC) and establishes the Office of State Ethics (OSE) and a nine-member Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board as its successor. Establishing a completely new office, with better defined powers and structure, will help restore trust in state government.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Protection Against Identity Theft

Public Act 05-148 allows consumers to freeze their credit report and requires businesses to inform the affected consumers if there has been a security breach involving their computerized personal information. The law prohibits a credit rating agency from releasing a frozen credit report, or any information in it, without the consumer's express authorization. It authorizes most types of businesses to deem a credit application incomplete, and an insurer to deny an application, if it finds that a consumer's credit report is frozen.

SENIORS

Study of Elderly Housing Complexes

Public Act 05-239 will address concerns about state-assisted elderly housing projects. It requires state social service agencies to assist local housing authorities in identifying and accessing their services and requires several agencies to develop plans detailing their outreach efforts, available services, and crisis intervention activities. The act also requires a comprehensive assessment of rental assistance needs for state-assisted elderly and disabled housing projects.

SPENDING AND TAXES

2005-2007 State Budget

While there were a number of good points in the 2005-2007 budget package that was approved this year, it also contained exorbitant spending increases (12 percent) and tax hikes (\$738 million). Bethlehem will receive \$1,354,543 in municipal aid funds in Fiscal Year '06, an increase of \$60,009. Litchfield will receive \$1,601,809 in municipal aid funds in FY 06, an increase of \$95,639. Morris will receive \$731,028 in municipal aid funds in FY 06, an increase of \$39,501. Warren will receive \$211,837 in municipal aid funds in FY 06, an increase of \$25,718. Woodbury will receive \$923,342 in municipal aid funds in FY 06, an increase of \$56,025.

New Tax Study

This year, the Legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee commissioned a comprehensive study of Connecticut's taxation system. There have been studies of various aspects of Connecticut's state and local tax system in the past several years. However, there has not been a comprehensive look at the entire system since 1991.

CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS WORK 123 DAYS
OUT OF THE YEAR JUST TO PAY THEIR TAXES

Future CT Burden



Connecticut



National Avg.



Alaska



Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May. Jun. Jul.